



CONFRONTATION AND COOPERATION

1000 YEARS OF POLISH–GERMAN–RUSSIAN RELATIONS

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Rebel-war in Ukraine

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1. Introduction

The relations between Poland and its East neighbours after 1989 have undergone various stages, associated with both changing internal situation of Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, as well as the general political situation of the region. In 2006 after the Orange Revolution it seemed that the balance in the region could be disturbed by:

- destabilization of the socio-political balance in this part of Europe, if as the result of external actions or internal clashes the irredentism actions took place in the East of Ukraine
- possible attempts of violent actions against the democratic revolution in Belarus, although it seems highly unlikely at this moment
- possible inflow of a large number of immigrants in case of the above mentioned factors
- the Russian resource blackmail¹.

During the years after the Orange Revolution, especially in Ukraine, the significant political transformations took place, which resulted in the

current difficult situation in this country on the verge of the civil war. The Russian influence in generating and fuel conflicts in the East of Ukraine is clearly visible, too. The incorporation of the Crimea by Russia in 2014 means the breach of existing international treaties on the inviolability of borders, and most of all the agreement between Great Britain, Russia and the USA from 1994 in which Ukraine had given up its nuclear arsenal to guarantee the security of the state. In December 1994 Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances stated that, "The United States and Great Britain have become the guarantors of the security of Ukraine after this state has joined the treaty on not spreading nuclear weapons in December 1994. The three countries have declared e.g. to respect the sovereignty and borders of Ukraine, and to refrain from any threats concerning the use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of Ukraine. They have also committed themselves not to use force against Ukraine, except in self-defense or other circumstances in accordance with United Nations Charter"².

¹ E. Sawa-Czajka, *Polska a nowa rzeczywistość geopolityczna na granicy wschodniej*, (in:) *Polska – Rosja – sztuka rozumienia*, Toruń 2007, p. 103-104.

² *MSZ wzywa do respektowania integralności terytorialnej Ukrainy*, <http://fakty.interia.pl/raport-zamieszki-na-ukrainie/aktualnosci/news-msz-wzywa-do-respektowania-integralnosci-terytorialnej-ukrainId,1114605>, 25.06.2014.

2. The Mutinous War – E. Messner³

Russia decided to take advantage of the current crisis in Ukraine and to separate Crimea from this country. The methods that are being used, both in Crimea, and currently in the East Ukraine are of new character – the hybrid war. It can be characterized as the participation of various subjects and actors in a conflict, who have at their disposal different kinds of weapons, and are often inspired by external objects, not participating directly in the conflict. Such a conflict was described in the 1950s by a forgotten theoretician of military art Evgienij Eduardovitch Messner (Е.Э. Месснер)⁴ This Russian tsarist officer, who had emigrated from the Communist Russia, lived between 1891 and 1976⁵. His life was very interesting, especially his work in Balkans, where he used to live till the end of WWII. After he had emigrated to South America he was working on the theory of wars and conflicts. In his works powstały *Мятеж – имя Третьей Всемирной, Всемирная Мятежевойна, Хочешь мира, победи мятежевойну!*⁶ he published his own theory of rebel-war (Мятежевойна).

Photo 1. Evgienij Eduardovitch Messner



Source: <http://obsrvr.livejournal.com/1286543.html>, 26.06.2014.

³ “Evgeny Messner defined it as a “rebel-war” (myatezhvoina.) According to Messner, in such a war ‘the fighters are not an army, they are more of a people’s movement than an army.’ In this case the word ‘people’ has neither a positive nor a negative connotation”, An Apposite Response http://in.rbth.com/articles/2011/02/07/post-terrorism_syndrome_12133.html, 15.08.2014 .

⁴ In Poland K.Kraj was writing about him (the materials owned by the author) in: *Wojny asymetryczne czy Мятежевойна Jewgienija Messnera zagrożeniem dla XXI wieku.*

⁵ Мятежевойна, http://nvo.ng.ru/history/1999-11-05/7_rebelwar.html, 27.05.2014.

⁶ Е.Э. Месснер, *Всемирная Мятежевойна*, Москва 2004; Е.Э. Месснер, *Хочешь мира, победи мятежевойну!*, Москва 2005.

Messner`s works, after many years are now published in Russian Federation⁷.



The main theses of E.Messner`s works are as follows: In the 20th cent. the classical wars ended. They would be replaced by the conflicts of rebellion type (Мятеж thus Mutinous War, rebel-war) without apparent fronts and clearly determined opponents.

In this type of conflicts psychology and propaganda are increasingly getting more important in the preparation and course of a conflict/war.

According to Messner there is the following hierarchy of objectives:

- decomposition of the unity of an enemy nation,
- breaking its active part (army, guerillas, the fighting national organizations),
- takeover or destruction of psychologically valuable objects,
- takeover or destruction of materially valuable objects,
- the external effects: making attempts to acquire new allies, while weakening the allies of the enemy.

At the same time attempts should be made to:

- strengthen the unity of the own nation,
- save own armed forces,
- defend own objects of particular importance also in terms of psychology,
- avoid giving pretext for the negative assessment of our own activities by neutral countries we are interested in,
- in all situations take into consideration not only the reactions of the authorities but also of all the groups of the society⁸.

According to Messner, the main aim of Mutinous War is: „to hold in bondage (в плен) the enemy nation.

⁷ *Мятежевойна*, http://nvo.ng.ru/history/1999-11-05/7_rebelwar.html, 27.05.2014; *Месснер Евгений Эдуардович*, <http://www.grwar.ru/persons/persons.html?id=3635&PHPSESSID=91e1080c0f732684e2b59eb3ed018a08> 27.05.2014.

⁸ *Мятежевойна*, http://nvo.ng.ru/history/1999-11-05/7_rebelwar.html, 27.05.2014. (Author’s translation).

Obviously, not in physical sense, but to destroy its ideological foundations, plant doubts, turmoil and confusion. Make them believe in our ideas and convince to them. Propaganda is the means to achieve the above aims⁹.

3. Current situation in Ukraine and hybrid war

These generally presented assumptions of Messner's works let us presume that the war of such a type is being waged in Ukraine right now, which is pointed out by both the Ukrainian authorities¹⁰ and mass media¹¹. It seems that Russia is realizing the elements of Mutinous War step by step, paying special attention to its non-military aspects. The conflict in Ukraine, and especially the criminal takeover of Crimea by the Russians, had been well prepared when it comes to Russian media and hater propaganda on the Internet¹². The range of use activities is immense, and it includes all kinds of media in both Russian and English, especially the television Russia Today, which for many years has been the propaganda channel of the Kremlin with the exceptionally primitive any-western propaganda.

The situation in Ukraine is changing dynamically. The protests in Kiev Majdan, the escape of Janukowycz, taking over of Crimea, and the beginning of fights in the eastern Ukraine, the election of the present President of Ukraine, Petro Poroszenko – all of these have happened during the last five months. It seems that currently (June 2014) the situation is starting to stabilize, and the suspension of military actions in the east of Ukraine announced by the President might be the first step towards the calming of the situation.

The conflict in Ukraine has been described as a hybrid war, i.e. the merger of the conventional conflict with a guerilla war.

⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁰ *Ukraińskie MSZ: Rosja rozpoczęła agresję przeciwko Ukrainie*, <http://fakty.interia.pl/raport-zamieszki-na-ukrainie/aktualnosci/news-ukrainskie-msz-rosja-rozpoczela-agresje-przeciwko-ukrainie,nId,1433011>, 27.05.2014.

¹¹ *Россия ведет против Украины войну нового типа, к которой готовилась несколько лет*, <http://www.unian.net/politics/917434-rossiya-vedet-protiv-ukrainyi-voynu-novogo-tipa-k-kotoroy-gotovilas-neskolko-let-minoboronyi.html>, 27.05.2014.

¹² Compare with notes at: E. Sawa-Czajka, *Jak długo jeszcze*, <http://www.geopolityka.org/komentarze/2724-elzbieta-sawa-czajka-jak-dlugo-jeszcze>, 26.06.2014.

In 2013 Walerij Gierasimow- the vice minister of defense and the chief of the Staff of the Russian army described the conflict Russia is prepared for¹³ after the experience in Chechnya as well as internal terrorism. He pointed to the features of such a conflict:

- the lack of either the beginning or the end of the conflict-the lack of the declaration of war and capitulation,
- seldom direct contacts of the fighting sides-precise missile strikes from large distance,
- blurring the division into soldiers and civilians, who are armed by an attacking state, thus being even more dangerous (unknown)¹⁴.

In his splendid analytical text in the weekly magazine „Polityka” Łukasz Wójcik makes such a comment on Gierasimow's statement, „Looking today at Ukraine one must admit that Gierasimow knew, what he was writing about. He omitted, however, the most significant feature of a new war, namely that it won't be fought in the old-fashioned way in battlefields or city streets, but most of all in people's heads. As Ukraine shows today, it is not about destroying the opponent, but acquiring the influence over it, most preferably the one it doesn't even realize. Paradoxically, the main objective of such a war is to create the situation in which it won't be necessary to use any physical force, as it happened in Crimea. It is about making people betray their own state and support the aggressor¹⁵.”

Janins Berzins¹⁶, a history professor from Riga, described the phases of hybrid war, which in splendid way reflect the actual situation in Ukraine and Crimea:

The first stage. Preparation for the intervention-psychological, diplomatic, ideological methods. In Ukraine case the stage had already taken place during EuroMajdan at the beginning of 2014, when it turned out that the protest was of permanent character and had social support. Russian media and diplomacy were making every attempt to diminish the importance of the protest. Russia Today TV had ready judgments and experts (unfortunately also the Poles) ready to confirm that the protests had been inspired by the West and were of nationalistic character. The Russian representative Valenij Łukin didn't sign the agreement between the protesting and Janukowicz made, with the participation of among the others Radosław Sijkorski, on 21st

¹³ Ł. Wójcik, *Wojna typu zgaduj-zgadula*, „Polityka”, nr 20/2014, s. 17.

¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 17–18.

¹⁵ Ibidem.

¹⁶ <http://www.lza.lv/scientists/BerzinsJ.htm>, 26.06.2014.

February 2014¹⁷. After the escape of Janukowycz the new authorities in Kiev were acknowledged as illegal by Russia¹⁸.

The second stage. Misinforming both authorities and societies of other states, but also the own one, by judging the protesting, mainly the right sector. The terms most frequently use by the media were: fascism, Bandera followers, fascists, nationalists. A particularly intense propaganda was broadcast at that time by the Russian state television and of course irreplaceable, Russia Today¹⁹, although some of the reporters of the station condemned on-air its propaganda character during the conflict in Crimea. „I cannot be a part of Putin propaganda”²⁰ said on-air finishing her program Liz Wahl, an American journalist working for the channel on 5th March 2014.

Also the inhabitants of Crimea were highly manipulated. They had been convinced that the authorities in Kiev would limit the use of Russian in the name of Ukrainian nationalism. Generally accepted Russian propaganda made it possible for Putin to take Crimea without fights. Even the current difficult economic situation in Crimea hasn't changed the enthusiastic attitude of Russian Speaking inhabitants to their new homeland, despite the fact that there has already appeared Russian mafia introducing new order in business²¹. This enthusiasm isn't shared by the Muslims of Crimea, who are historically the rulers of the peninsula, and once again have become the hostages of history taking place in their land.

The third stage. Threatening and bribing people doing business in Russia and with Russia, high rank military men, policemen, administration. Such a situation was clearly visible throughout the conflict in Crimea as well as at the initial stages of the conflict in the east of Ukraine. Numerous connections between Ukrainian military people and militia men with Russia, made it

easier for Russians. Many of them were educated in Russia, and the fact that previously they were the citizens of the same state wasn't meaningless. Additionally the earnings in Russian security institutions are several times higher than in Ukrainian ones, therefore no wonder, especially in case of the inhabitants of Crimea, that after it had been overtaken by Russia they willingly agreed to work in Russian institutions. Military expert, Dymitro Tymczuk, claims on the official site of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, „The message the Russians send to the Ukrainian services both in the east and before in Crimea can be summarized in one word „money”.” Tymczuk is writing, „The problem is that Ukrainian militiaman earns 300 dollars a month, whereas the Russian one, across the border, 1200. (...) Ukrainian military and militia institutions are being unbelievably infiltrated by Russian agents. Most of them appeared in Ukraine between 2010 and 2013, after SBU (the Security Service of Ukraine) had been reformed. Wiktor Janukowicz appointed Walery Choroszkowski as its chief, who strengthened the activities to work out American agents, at the same time giving up the struggle against the Russian ones. (...) The Russians managed to neutralize the Black Sea Fleet so quickly thanks to their agents in its structure. They have been active since 2009 when SBU signed the agreement on cooperation with Federalna Służba Bezpieczeństwa (FSB) of Russia, and the officers of the latter one could return to Sevastopol after the years”²².

They didn't manage, though, to threaten the majority of Ukrainian oligarchs, especially the most powerful ones. Dmytro Firtasz²³, Rinat Achmetow²⁴ and Ihor Kołomojski²⁵ supported the transformation, and Petro Poroszenko was elected the President of Ukraine in the first tour on 25th May 2014.

²² „Milicjanci sabotują rozkazy dowódców”, <http://www.tvn24.pl/wiadomosci-ze-swiata,2/milicjanci-sabotuja-rozkazy-dowodcow-pieniadze-to-argument-na-korzysc-rosji,418618.html>, 26.06.2014.

²³ Ukraiński oligarcha Dmytro Firtasz zatrzymany w Wiedniu, <http://wiadomosci.wp.pl/kat,1348,title,Ukraiński-oligarcha-Dmytro-Firtasz-zatrzymany-w-Wiedniu,wid,16469850,wiadomosc.html?ticaid=112f9e#czytajdalej>, 26.06.2014.

²⁴ Rinat Achmetow wysła pracowników na proukraińskie manifestacje, <http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/swiat/rinat-achmetow-wysla-pracownikow-na-proukraińskie-manifestacje/tjcl3>, 26.06.2014.

²⁵ Ihor Kołomojski – król przelewów idzie na wojnę, <http://swiat.newsweek.pl/ihor-kolomojski-król-przelewow-idzie-na-wojne-newsweek-pl,artykuly,285762,1.html>, 26.06.2014.

¹⁷ Rosja wzywa do rozmów i powołuje się na dokument Sikorskiego, <http://niezalezna.pl/52481-rosja-wzywa-do-rozmow-i-powoluje-sie-na-dokument-sikorskiego>, 26.06.2014.

¹⁸ Sikorski wzywa Rosję do uznania rządu Jaceniuka, <http://fakty.interia.pl/raport-zamieszki-na-ukrainie/aktualnosci/news-sikorski-wzywa-rosje-do-uznania-rzadu-jaceniuka,nId,1355722>, 26.06.2014.

¹⁹ <http://pl.argyletv.com/Default.aspx?Ogladaj-Russia-Today-Po-Polsku-Na-Zywo-W-Internecie=15349>, 27.05.2014.

²⁰ Dziennikarka Russia Today zrezygnowała. Na wizji, <http://www.rp.pl/artykul/1091949.html>, 26.06.2014.

²¹ Witaj Matuszko!, „Forum”, nr 12/2014, p. 47.

The fourth stage. The appearing of armed people (gangs/terrorists/separatists, „green creatures”²⁶) taking over administration buildings, airports, railway stations by them. It happened in Crimea, Donieck, Ługańsk, Słowiańsk. It is still happening in eastern Ukraine. The porous border with Russia made it possible to move a considerable number of people and weapons, and casualties appear on both sides. Armed people fighting in the east of Ukraine call themselves self-defense and claim, that they represent regional separatist beings such as Doniecka Republika Ludowa (the People’s Republic of Donieck)²⁷. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine stated on 25th May 2014 that Russia had started the aggression against Ukraine²⁸.

The fifth stage. Settling an informal zone where flights are forbidden due to the threat of shooting down planes by specialist weapons the separatists have at their disposal²⁹. Such weapons is standard military equipment and obviously cannot be purchased in military surplus stores, as has been suggested by Władimir Putin. The training and kind of weapons the separatists have at their disposal clearly points at their association with Russian special forces. In this situation the decision made by Russian parliament (Duma) on withdrawing the permission for Russian army to enter the territory of Ukraine is merely a rhetorical figure since Russian troops are already there. It has been identified that in the districts of Donieck and Ługańsk soldiers of 45 Guard airborne regiment Kupianka-1, which garrisons nearby Moscow, are active³⁰. On the night from 13th

to 14th June another Ukrainian military plane with 49 people on board was shot down over Ługańsk. „After the tragedy in Ługańsk the Chief of European Commission Herman van Rompuy appealed to Russia emphasizing that supporting and arming the rebels in the east of Ukraine is unacceptable. At the same time the German Chancellor Angela Merkel and the President of France Francois Hollande phoned the President of Russia Władimir Putin. As the communication says, Hollande and Merkel, „expressed their deep concern about the continuing fights in the east of Ukraine, especially the consequences of the attack in which at least 49 Ukrainian soldiers had been killed on Saturday morning.” „They emphasized the significance of the immediate armistice in Ukraine.” It is about precise conditions to ease the tension in the area, most of all by avoiding the inflow of fighters and weapons across the border as well as summoning the separatists to stop the fight”³¹.

The sixth stage. Precise strike on key objects e.g. airports or other elements of critical infrastructure, which according to Janis Berzins will be the preparation for the direct intervention³². By 26th June 2014 the separatists didn’t manage to take over any of such objects permanently, and the determined attitude of the President of Ukraine and the strive to keep the unity of the state give hope for the end of this fierce phase of the conflict.

The seventh stage. Invasion.

The eighth stage. Elimination of remaining resistance³³.

This tactics was fully used in Crimea, and is currently being used, including the sixth stage, in the east of Ukraine.

²⁶ At the press conference on 4th March 2014 Putin stated that unmarked units operating in Crimea were just the people who had bought their uniforms in military surplus stores and were in no way connected with the Russian army. S.f.: *Ukraina na żywo: Władimir Putin na konferencji: Na razie nie ma konieczności wprowadzenia wojsk*, <http://www.rmfm24.pl/fakty/news-ukraina-na-zywo-wladimir-putin-na-konferencji-na-razie-nie-m,nId,1279417>, 26.06.2014.

²⁷ *Jest zawieszenie broni na Ukrainie. Separatyści zgodzili się wstrzymać ogień do 27 czerwca*, <http://wpolityce.pl/swiat/202002-jest-zawieszenie-broni-na-ukrainie-separatysci-zgodzili-sie-wstrzymac-ogien-do-27-czerwca>, 26.06.2014.

²⁸ *Ukraińskie MSZ: Rosja rozpoczęła agresję przeciwko Ukrainie*, <http://fakty.interia.pl/raport-zamieszki-na-ukrainie/aktualnosci/news-ukrainskie-msz-rosja-rozpoczela-agresje-przeciwko-ukrainie,nId,1433011>, 27.05.2014.

²⁹ Ciężkie walki na wschodzie Ukrainy. Separatyści zestrzelili wojskowy śmigłowiec, <http://fakty.interia.pl/raport-zamieszki-na-ukrainie/aktualnosci/news-ciezkie-walki-na-wschodzie-ukrainy-separatysci-zestrzelili-w,nId,1433789>, 29.05.2014 r.

³⁰ *Ukraina: Zidentyfikowano ludzi, którzy pojawili się w*

Słowiańsku i Kramatorsku. To żołnierze rosyjscy, http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/wiadomosci/1,114871,15808518,Ukraina__Zidentyfikowano_ludzi__ktorzy_pojawili_sie.html, 26.06.2014.

³¹ *Zaloba narodowa na Ukrainie: w strąconym samolocie zginęło 49 osób. Walki trwają*, <http://www.polskieradio.pl/5/3/Artykul/1152666,Zaloba-narodowa-na-Ukrainie-w-straconym-samolocie-zginelo-49-osob-Walki-trwaja>, 26.06.2014

³² Ł. Wójcik, op. cit., p. 18.

³³ Ibidem, p. 17–18.

4. Conclusions

The conflict around Ukraine has in a way put an end to the perception of the international cooperation so far. The resetting relations with Russia didn't work, nor did searching the new possibilities of cooperation within G-8 or other structures. The situation in Ukraine has revealed the old face of KGB Putin, who is lying blatantly and will do anything to achieve his aims. It is perfectly presented in two documentaries „System Putina”³⁴ („The Putin's System”) and „Putinomania” showing the anatomy of acquiring power and building up Putin's image. The toughness of Russia in its pursuit to reach the gas diktat in Europe has become even more visible. On the one hand the gas blackmail towards Ukraine, on the other signing 30 year long agreement with China, which decreases Russia's dependence on European sales markets. Russia is also making attempts to create Euro-Asian Union, which has Kazakhstan and Belarus has already joined, and Armenia and Turkmenistan are about to join.

However, Russian Federation is the state whose power is based on mining and selling natural resources, and whose economy is little or not innovative at all. Vast territories are also difficult to manage. Siberia, where separatist tendencies have been present since the 19th cent., might find its way to reach bigger autonomy or even independence. The eastern part of Russia is closer to Beijing or Seoul or Moscow. The future of the state in longer perspective might be surprising. The internal situation in the European part of Russia is also diversified. Putting in motion democratic procedures, even so feeble as in Russia, has caused the emergence of citizens society, and the incorporation of Crimea, even though supported by the majority of the society, was at the same time defied by some intellectual groups³⁵.

For the European Union and NATO the conclusions coming from the Ukrainian crisis are following:

1. It is necessary to adapt the strategy and actions of NATO for the new war demands, namely the hybrid war with all its consequences. The current defense doctrine of Poland also needs to be modernized. Defense strategies by 2022 take into consideration asymmetrical dangers, however

they don't include the possibility of hybrid type war, emphasizing more classical threats³⁶.

2. The role of propaganda-information in modern times conflicts. The fact that Ukraine lost propaganda war in the first stage of the conflict has influenced its course as well as the international opinions. Western Europe doesn't actually have propaganda tools in the Russian language to such an extent as the ones used by Russia in the Ukrainian conflict.

In the speech by Minister Radosław Sikorski in the Polish Parliament in May 2014, we could hear about the plans of establishing a television in Russian. The Minister said, "What happened in Crimea, however bizarre, was certainly a war. There were few shootings or explosions, and Russian soldiers didn't have badges on their uniforms. Yet, there was the atmosphere of fear and constraint. The President of Russia has admitted to, what we have been saying since the start: Russia has performed armed intervention in Crimea. Beside this bizarre war in Ukraine and around it, there is also information war of global range. Poland is being accused of unthinkable actions or intentions. We have heard recently about Polish fighters allegedly fighting in Ukraine, training camps for the Ukrainian opposition that are located in our country, even about the plans of announcing autonomy by Polish minority in Ukraine. Editorial offices spreading such sensational news will, however, be disappointed: there isn't even a grain of truth in your reports. It shows, how important information is in modern society. The pan-European project of the Russian language television, whose idea is really supported by our allies from the Baltic states is really worth considering. It is also an argument for the reform of our media in foreign languages"³⁷.

The forgotten theory of Mutiny War / hybrid war / rebel-war perfectly matches the description of current situation³⁸ across the eastern border of the European Union.

³⁴ System Putina (2007), <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FwWhNPGIEuw>, 26.06.2014.

³⁵ *Rosjanie przeciw aneksji Krymu*, „Rosja i Ukraina bez Putina” – na transparentach demonstrantów w Moskwie, http://wyborcza.pl/duzy_kadr/5,97904,15629659,Rosjanie_przeciw_aneksji_Krymu__Rosja_i_Ukraina_bez.html?i=6, 26.06.2014.

³⁶ Strategia rozwoju systemu bezpieczeństwa narodowego do 2022 r., http://archiwalny.mon.gov.pl/pl/strona/349/LG_46_278, 26.06.2014; compare also: Madej M., *Zagrożenia asymetryczne bezpieczeństwa państw obszaru transatlantyckiego*, Warszawa 2007.

³⁷ *Informacja Ministra Spraw Zagranicznych o zadaniach polskiej polityki zagranicznej w 2014 r.*, <http://www.msz.gov.pl/resource/9699a82d-9e2d-41d4-bd4e-2095b1c1fabe:JCR>, 30.05.2014; compare also: *Priorytety polskiej polityki zagranicznej 2012–2016* [Priorities of Polish foreign policy 2012–2016], <http://www.msz.gov.pl/resource/aa1c4aec-a52f-45a7-96e5-06658e73bb4e:JCR>, 7.06.2014.

³⁸ Warsaw, June 2014.

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